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**OPERATIVES**  
*Are Sowing*  
**DISTRUST**  
*of MUSLIMS*





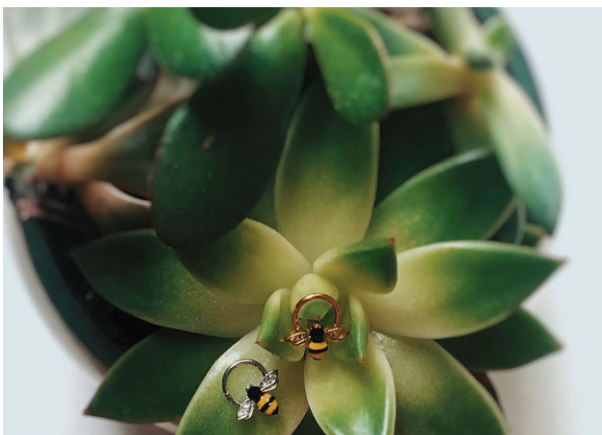
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## THE SHORTLIST

Scenes from the 2019 Minnesota State Fair at [citypages.com](http://citypages.com)



MIKE MADISON

## THE STAT SHEET

**\$100,000**

Settlements St. Paul paid for two crashes involving cops responding to emergencies while looking at their laptops

**1**

After closures in St. Paul and International Falls, the Lake Street Kmart is the last one standing in Minnesota

**3**

Hours Delta recommends that passengers arrive early due to security delays at MSP

**3,909**

Number of guns confiscated by police agencies in Minnesota last year

**“They obviously haven’t read the Bible, where marriage is frequently between one man and many women.”**

Reader Jon Reynolds responds to “St. Cloud wedding videographers sue to discriminate against gay couples,” at [citypages.com](http://citypages.com).

## SHOOTERS FOR SCIENCE

**GROWN MEN CAN’T** be bothered with a little more paperwork, even if it means preventing the next slaughter at an elementary school. So conservatives are stretching to comical lengths to avoid doing anything about gun safety. Their latest diversionary culprit: science.

Evangelical leader Tony Perkins, head of the Family Research Council, announced on Fox that if schools stopped teaching evolution—i.e. that kids have emerged from “primordial slime”—all would be well again.

This follows recent blame-game attempts at mental illness and video games—anything to avoid ideas like universal background checks and red flag laws. Because if grown men are required to make even minor sacrifices to save lives, that’s the real tyranny.

## POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

Meet the **ST. PAUL WOMAN** you really don’t want as your neighbor

**‘WEIRD AL’ YANKOVIC** at the 2019 MN State Fair: I need a therapist now!

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Time just called Minneapolis’ **ALL SQUARE** one of the 100 most important places in the world

**MINNESOTA BEER** convinced Australian to fly 21 hours for a try



# HOME OF THE WEIRD

National Geographic elevates State Fair food culture to the world stage

We don't have to be told the Great Minnesota Get-Together is something special. From llama costume contests to all-you-can-drink milk, the State Fair shines like a beacon of beauty and weirdness. For those of us living within spitting distance of its epicenter, we can almost take this magic for granted.

But when National Geographic—a magazine launched in 1888, known for documenting the ends of the Earth, from the depths of the Mariana Trench to Mt. Everest's peak—dispatches an elite team to America's flyover country just to cover our State Fair's unique food culture? That adds an extra layer of warm fuzzies to the festivities.

National Geographic's trio of Katie Thornton, Jenn Ackerman, and Tim Gruber roamed the fair this past week and

returned with a multi-media report fit to woo the world. In "The most absurd foods you can eat at the Minnesota State Fair," the globetrotting publication captures the fair's essence in both word and image.

Ackerman and Gruber's slideshow of photos bursts with humor and surrealism, while Thornton takes a more serious tone in her coverage. The latter does justice to Minnesota's obsession with absurd foods and dives into the origins of stuff-on-a-stick (even if she doesn't quite get our beloved Pronto Pup right). After stopping by those infamous Princess Kay of the Milky Way butter sculptures, Thornton pauses to shed light on some of the fair's quieter aspects.

"But the food culture of the Minnesota State Fair is not just about consumption," she writes. "Every year, bakers like St. Paul's Kris Cramer submit their goods to a team of judges who award the highly coveted blue ribbons in categories such



EMILY CASSEL

as 'unfrosted honey cakes' and 'grand cake sweepstakes.'

"At the urging of her in-laws ('to bring honor to our family'), the self-taught baker submitted her peanut butter cookies and oatmeal cookies—and took home blue ribbons on her first try. 'I was so surprised, I had my husband double-check the results

because I couldn't believe it,' Cramer says."

The best version of the Minnesota State Fair consists of these "small" honors, combined to big (tasty) effect, underscored by moments of surprise.

How lovely to end on this parting note—to be so seen by the likes of titans.

—SARAH BRUMBLE

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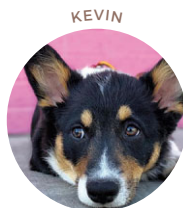
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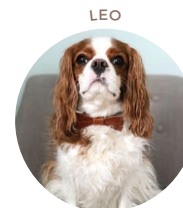
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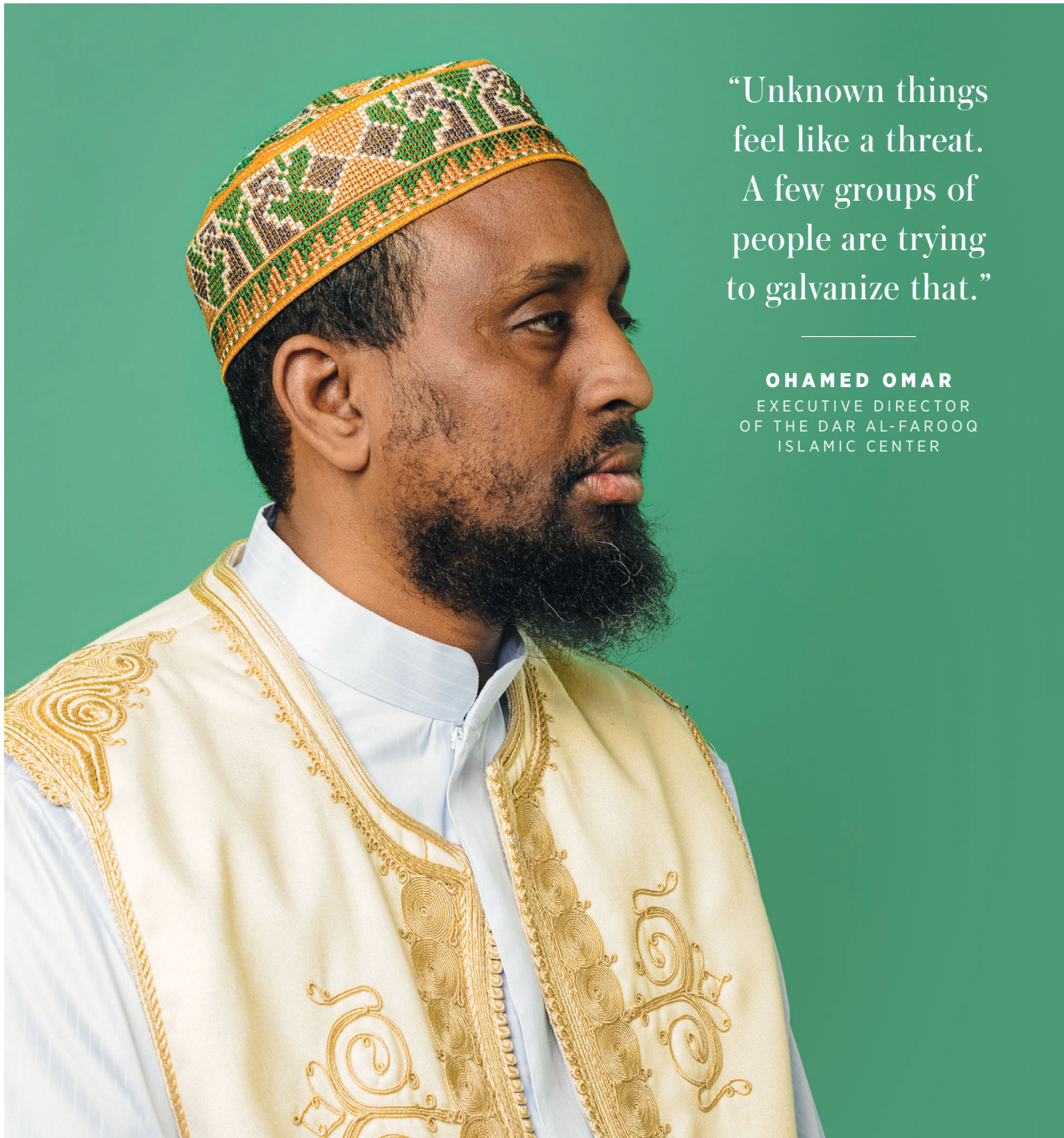


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people are trying  
to galvanize that.”

**OHAMED OMAR**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
OF THE DAR AL-FAROOQ  
ISLAMIC CENTER

BOBBY ROGERS

## HOW MINNESOTA’S REPUBLICAN OPERATIVES *Are Sowing Distrust of Muslims*

**L**AST YEAR, I was asked by the civil rights group CAIR-Minnesota to research the financing behind a rash of disparaging news coverage of Minnesota’s Muslims. I assumed I’d be cataloging the work of a few small-town bloggers, and that the hard part would be managing expectations.

I smiled, deposited the check, and confined my white-boy skepticism to my notes. It took less than a week of Googling to learn how wrong I was.

Despite the stereotype of a rural “Trump Country” lashing out at immigrants, most of Minnesota’s aggressively negative news about Muslims is produced by a group of Twin Cities donors, policy wonks, and strategists tied to the state’s most powerful Republican organizations.

By  
**LOGAN CARROLL**

“You can’t object when your children are bullied by feral Somali youth,” declared Alpha News in a story last September titled, “The St. Cloud Times Shills for Refugee Resettlement.” Its president, Alex Kharam, is the executive director of the Freedom Club, a major power in Minnesota Republican politics.



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"Textbooks in America must be approved by Islamist groups," claimed Deplorable Housewives of the Midwest in June 2018. The blog's CEO is Susan Richardson, who served on Ted Cruz's Minnesota Leadership Team during the 2016 presidential primary.

"They [Somali refugees] also bring cultural and law enforcement challenges: the practice of polygamy and female genital mutilation, low workforce participation by men, and inexperience with the requirements of citizenship and voting," announced the Center of the American Experiment—Minnesota's premier conservative think tank—in 2016. It has

"In 2010 the Freedom Club led the way in putting the Minnesota Legislature in Republican control for the first time in state history," the club's website boasts. Cummins and his allies used the opportunity to push for a right-to-work bill, which would allow workers to opt out of paying union dues, while still requiring unions to bargain on their behalf.

Yet Republicans refused to take up the issue, so Cummins began looking for a more effective strategy and the people to enact it. He found Alex Kharam, a former aide to Minnesota state Rep. Branden Peterson (R-Andover), who became the club's executive director in 2013.

## **MOST OF MINNESOTA'S AGGRESSIVELY NEGATIVE NEWS ABOUT MUSLIMS IS PRODUCED BY TWIN CITIES STRATEGISTS WITH REPUBLICAN TIES.**

counted VPs from multiple Fortune 500 companies on its board over the years, including John Gibbs of Comcast and Bill Guidera of 21st Century Fox.

Though I grew up in western South Dakota, I, too, had bought into the "Trump Country" narrative. So I was shocked to learn how completely the facts supported the experiences of Muslim Minnesotans.

### THE ENGINEER

**R**obert Cummins is an engineer and entrepreneur who freely mixes his Catholicism, politics, and business. He founded Fargo Electronics, a printer-manufacturing company, in 1974. After selling in the '90s, he launched another one, Primera Technology, and founded the Freedom Club. Within a decade, it had become a mainstay of Minnesota Republican politics.

According to its website, the elite conservative group is composed of people who "understand the impact of out-of-control wasteful government spending, high taxes, burdensome regulation and big government." It takes no official public positions on immigration, religion, or race.

The Freedom Club doesn't make its membership public, but an application requires a donation to the Freedom Club State PAC, which gives to politicians who share its agenda. Between 2009 and 2010, according to campaign finance records, more than 40 percent of the MNGOP's donations came from the Freedom Club or from people who made membership-level donations.

The investment paid off.

Two years later, Kharam incorporated Alpha News, registering it to the same UPS Store mailbox he used to register a conservative communications firm he runs. Kharam has been president of Alpha ever since. Another Cummins employee, Cole Mathison, is treasurer.

(Cummins declined to be interviewed for this story. But his lawyer, Ronald Shutz, offered a written statement: "Bob Cummins has been one of the leading philanthropists in Minnesota, providing opportunities for inner-city schools, churches, and other charities enabling them to serve and better our community. Any characterization of Mr. Cummins as a funder of 'anti-Muslim' propaganda is false.")

At first glance, Alpha News appears to be just another right-leaning site. A banner declares it an "independent voice for Minnesotans." Though it has little to no advertising, it studiously mimics the tone of mainstream media, with stories about pro-life events, elections, and crime. Yet this style is embedded with a variety of rhetorical devices used to perpetuate conservative tropes without saying much explicitly radical.

One is exaggeration. Take a holy day event at the Mall of America in 2016, attended by thousands of Muslims. When a fight among four boys and six girls ages 12 to 15 led to disorderly conduct arrests, Alpha reported that "Chaos Breaks out at Mall of America During Islamic Celebration."

Writers also weaponize insinuation. In a story about fraud committed by a Somali daycare provider, Alpha wrote: "Why did the state allow the center to remain in operation after the April 2014 citation about the lack of background studies for





DAVID JOLIS/STAR TRIBUNE

so many employees? Why did they remain open after surveillance was finished in May of 2014? Questions remain.”

In another 2015 story about international money transfers by Somalis, it wrote: “But without a secure and stable government, there is absolutely no way to ensure the money doesn’t end up in the wrong hands. If the Congress members get their way, then it’s fair for Minnesota taxpayers to question whether their money, via welfare cash assistance programs, is being sent overseas.”

In neither piece did they answer the questions they raised. Nor did they present evidence that money transfers “wound up in the wrong hands.” They simply incepted an idea: Somalis fund terrorism with welfare.

“When I look at Alpha News, it’s really hard to tell if it’s a newspaper morphing into a partisan organization, or a partisan organization using a news outlet as a front,” says David Schultz, a political science professor at Hamline University. “The lines are pretty blurred at this point.”

Or as Kharam wrote in 2017: “While theologians typically deal in the realm of truth, political consultants such as myself typically deal in the realm of power.” He did not respond to multiple interview requests.

#### THE TRUE BELIEVER

John Hinderaker has been on the Freedom Club’s board since at least 2013, but was well known in conservative circles for a decade prior thanks to Power Line, the blog he co-founded.

Unlike Alpha, Power Line makes no pretense of objectivity, featuring “commentary on the news from a conservative perspective.” Its pedigree is impressive. Regular contributors have written for the Weekly Standard, the New York Times, and lectured at Berkeley and Pepperdine.

Jim Hinderaker, president of the Center of the American Experiment, has called Islam a religion of “crazed, sadistic violence.”

Hinderaker was a partner at the Faegre Baker Daniels law firm until 2015, while churning out essays on subjects ranging from liberal bias in the media to his theories about Franklin Roosevelt. “I’ve always known that Roosevelt gave away the store to Stalin at Yalta, and have suspected him of being a Communist sympathizer,” he wrote in 2013.

He’s also displayed a pattern of animosity toward Muslims.

“Dearborn, Michigan, is home to a substantial Muslim population, and there is strong evidence that local authorities now enforce sharia [law] in preference to the Constitution of the United States,” he wrote in the 2010 piece, “Sharia comes to Michigan.”

“Does Islam have something to offer other than crazed, sadistic violence, committed to perpetuate the crudest forms of ignorance?” he added in a 2013 story. “If so, I haven’t seen it.”

Today, Hinderaker runs the Center of the American Experiment, a sizable Minnesota think tank with 14 staffers and an annual budget of more than \$1.5 million, according to nonprofit tax disclosures.

The center skewed center-right for most of its existence. Founder Mitch Pearlstein said his goal was to avoid polarizing issues like abortion and focus on broader economic issues. One early conference was titled “Freeing the Free Market: Making Minnesota the World’s Newest Capitalist State.”

These days, the center appears to be more hard-right advocate than conventional think tank. It buys billboards bent on undermining wind energy and encouraging teachers to opt out of paying union dues. Its research often reaches conclusions favored by corporate inter-

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ests. Hinderaker has spoken at several seminars hosted by the Koch brothers.

Perhaps nothing illustrates the center's rightward slide better than its annual dinner. In the '90s, mainstream figures such as Margaret Thatcher, Colin Powell, and Mikhail Gorbachev keynoted the event. Last year, it was Fox News firebrand Tucker Carlson, who recently called America's white supremacy problem a "hoax."

When Hinderaker took over as president and CEO, his hiring was approved by a board that included vice presidents from such notable companies as General Mills. A profile in the center's quarterly magazine praised his blog: "Power Line remains a premier website for political commentary."

In the piece, Hinderaker downplayed the fringe ideas of Power Line writers. "The views we advocate are mainstream, in most cases quite moderate," he said. He did not respond to repeated interview requests.

## WAGES OF FEAR

**M**ohamed Omar (no relation to U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar) is the executive director of the Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center in Bloomington. He has suffered the consequences of fear-mongering directed



AARON LAVINSKY / STAR TRIBUNE

at Muslims. "It's human nature," he says. "Everybody, they are not hateful but afraid. Unknown things feel like a threat. A few groups of people are trying to galvanize that."

Since 2015, neighbor Sally Ness has maintained the blog 5 Years of Collecting Data. She's cataloged hundreds of complaints about Dar Al-Farooq: rolling stops, illegal parking, and assemblies held later than the community center anticipated in its 2011 zoning application.

Attorney General Keith Ellison says even Syrian immigrants think of returning home, believing the U.S. has become unsafe.

"What is ok with bike riding at 4am, amplification after 10pm, and a dark parking lot?" she asked in a post last November, arguing that Bloomington should revoke the mosque's permit. (She did not respond to interview requests.)

Three years ago, several men who attended Dar Al-Farooq were convicted of attempting to join ISIS. The mosque became a frequent demon in right-wing blogs, which increasingly followed Ness' litany of complaints as proof of an ISIS invasion.

In 2016, Alpha News published a lengthy piece repeating Ness' allegations. The article said residents "fear for their personal safety" when using a nearby park.

A year later, three members of the Patriot Freedom Fighters militia drove from Clarence, Illinois, to throw a firebomb through Dar Al-Farooq's window, say federal prosecutors. Omar was in the next room when it exploded.

Minnesota's conservative media were quick to hint of a false-flag conspiracy. "Bloomington Mosque Bombing: Hoax, Inside Job Or The Same Thing?" was the headline of an Alpha News story by John Gilmore.

When police confirmed the bombing was a right-wing terrorist attack, Gilmore alleged that fake hate crimes were "legion" and that he, too, was a victim. "Let's be plain about what's going on here: the Regressive Left in Minnesota, in and out of media, are trying to silence those of us who are noticing what is going on."

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Sites like Alpha News are not responsible for terrorism. Yet, says Al Tompkins, a senior faculty member at the Poynter Institute, a national media think tank, they should consider how their charged language plays to the outer world.

"We have an ethical as well as a legal responsibility for what we do," says Tompkins. "Sometimes they're the same, but often they're different. The law tells you what you can do. Ethics tells you what you should do."

Schultz, the Hamline professor, agrees: "McDonald's and Coke understand that you can convince people to drink Coca-Cola and eat a cheeseburger. Media services or outlets that push routine, anti-Muslim sentiment can similarly be successful in influencing people's behavior."

Chip Berlet calls this kind of influence "scripted violence." He's a journalist and sociologist who has studied right-wing populism and extremism for decades. His work has appeared in publications ranging from the New York Times to scholarly titles such as Research in Political Sociology.

In the past, Berlet says, Jews and Catholics, Italians and Poles have all been targeted. Today it's Muslims, Latinos, Somalis. No matter the target, he notes, the language is remarkably similar: They're not like us; they'll never integrate into our society; we have to stop them.

## "IF YOU DENOUNCE A GROUP LONG ENOUGH AND OFTEN ENOUGH, SOMEONE WILL GO OUT AND ATTACK THEM."

"If you denounce a group long enough and often enough, someone will go out and attack them," Berlet says. "When they shoot up a synagogue or a mosque, they have a narrative where they're the hero."

Though the Dar Al-Farooq bombing is a worst-case scenario, Muslims must bear the smaller, day-to-day insecurities caused by the hate-mongering. Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison describes those in one word: fear.

Ellison says that Syrian, Iraqi, and Iranian immigrants tell him they think of returning to their home countries, afraid the U.S. is unsafe. "I mean, think about that," Ellison says. "You're a Syrian Muslim and you're thinking about going back to Syria because you think the United States is dangerous for Muslims."

Ellison has been a target since 2006, when Power Line first alleged that he was a Muslim extremist. As recently as 2018, the site repeated its most frequent

allegation, calling him "a long-time apostle of hate on behalf of Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam."

The Nation is categorized as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and Ellison did associate with them in the '90s. But he also apologized for that association and disavowed Farrakhan more than a decade ago.

### SOMALI-AMERICAN LIBERTARIAN-REPUBLICAN MUSLIM

**A**bdi Mohamed was raised on the east side of St. Paul and is Somali, Muslim, libertarian, and Republican. "I own a few American flag hats, just to kind of mess with my friends," he says.

Mohamed is stubborn, recoiling from the pressure he felt as a black man to

be liberal. "I'm socially conservative, coming from my faith-based background. But I'm also a live-and-let-live kind of guy, so that's where my libertarian views come from."

He got involved in Republican politics after David Sina, an east metro party official, shared a Facebook post alleging that Muslims would use caucuses to spread sharia law, and encouraged Republicans to turn out to "keep American Law and only American Law."

Mohamed works to oppose Islamophobic resolutions at caucuses and reach out to Republican groups, hoping to build bridges.

At times, he is hopeful. At one convention, before he could speak against a resolution outlawing sharia in public schools (religious education is already outlawed there), 10 others rose to speak against it.

At other times, he sees the depths of the paranoia. After speaking to a Tea Party group in Bloomington, he walked outside to find the neighborhood littered with pamphlets about coming holy wars between Christianity and Islam.

Mohamed knows a non-practicing Muslim from Senegal who has been involved with the MNGOP since 2009. The man told him that "four or five years ago, there was none of this sharia fear-

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# NOTHING BUT HEMP

Fall will bring sports — and reasons to try CBD

No one wants to think of it, but it's true. September is the beginning of the end and it's a matter of time until leaves scatter the ground and cars are stuck in snowbanks.

Between now and then, professional and student fall sports will become a draw for hundreds of thousands of fans, but athletes themselves will be subject to the pains and injuries associated with high impact trials from football, basketball, soccer and wrestling.

As it proliferates across the U.S. after its legalization in 2018, CBD has quickly become a resource for many athletes that need help recovering or dealing with complications from their wear and tear.

CBD is widely used, not only for sports but by those who suffer from chronic pain, certain forms of epilepsy, and those facing taxing cancer treatments and mental illness.

Research is being conducted all the time to provide a more clear picture of how the compound works in and for the body.

CBD is a relative of marijuana, but doesn't get users high. It only contains trace amounts of THC in its full-spectrum form, and works on the body's endocannabinoid system, or ECS, in a number of ways.

People find CBD to be a relaxing contribution to their daily life, while other strands and products are specially crafted with caffeine to perk users up in the morning.

It all depends on what someone aims to use CBD for.

The available research on both animals and humans is particularly promising for athletes who participate in high impact sports, however, as one of the most established possibilities of CBD is its use as an anti-inflammatory agent.

The National Institutes for Health indicate in some of their research that cannabidiol, CBD, could have wide-ranging possibilities as an anti-inflammatory.

Activities that are especially hard on the body's joints — such as football, basketball and other contact sports that require repeated collisions and even abrasions — are prime targets for CBD's potential effects.

"Ice and ibuprofen" has long been the mantra of athletes that face down bruising, soreness and everyday troubles from their physical activity or competitive field of choice.

Soon, CBD may become just as common in the locker room discussion about physical wellness.

CBD may seem to have seeped in everywhere, but there certainly is good reason for it. The hard part is knowing who to trust. Luckily, Nothing But Hemp offers CBD products, award-winning brands and education that are unmatched by other retailers.

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mongering.” But it has since “become rampant.”

Zavier Bicott is a carpenter and chairman of both Minnesota’s Republican Liberty Caucus (RLC) and Senate District 50, which includes Dar Al-Farooq. Partly in response to the bombing, and partly to reach out to people frequently ignored by Republicans, he decided to hold the RLC caucus at Dar Al-Farooq last year. “We knew there was going to be some controversy, but I wasn’t afraid of that,” he says.

Bicott invited Mohamed to speak. Both men say the event was successful, though only about 40 people showed up. Bicott was hoping for twice that.

Then came the backlash. One right-wing blog, Deplorable Housewives of the Midwest, excoriated Dar Al-Farooq, Islam, and Bicott in a post titled, “Only Submissive Women Need Apply.”

“Will there be two categories of women within the Republican party?” it asked. “Christian women who not only enjoy but demand equality, and the hijab-donning, second-class Islamic women?”

Deplorable Housewives routinely calls Islam a threat to human civilization. It was founded by Donna Azarian and Andrea Mayer-Bruestle, two former Alpha News writers, and by Susan Richardson, who served with Robert Cummins on Ted Cruz’s Minnesota Leadership Team during the 2016 presidential primary.

Business records filed with the Minnesota Secretary of State show the blog has 3,000 shares of privately held stock, but the site doesn’t disclose information about its financial backers. Writers’ contact information is not made public, and City Pages’ interview requests sent to a generic “contact us” address went unanswered.

Mohamed said he isn’t concerned with money in politics, save for the shadowy funding that stirs animus for his people. “I really am fearful of some of those nefarious players in the background who are pushing for that discontent and divisiveness.”

Yet he is also proof of Muslims’ ability to assimilate. He has since left the GOP for a nonpartisan occupation as a small business reporter.

Often, Islamophobia is framed as a campaign to divide Muslims from their neighbors. Yet Mohamed Omar and Abdi Mohamed both believe it won’t work.

“This is what they’ve done before,” Omar says. “When the Jewish came—Irish, Italians, Catholics—anytime a new group came, the people who came before tried to stop them.” All six of his children were born in Minnesota.

Mohamed echoes this sentiment. “We’re already a staple of Minnesota, we’re a part of this nation, we’re holding elected office around this country. So I feel discontented that there are people trying to uproot us from the American fabric, from being contributors to this nation.” 

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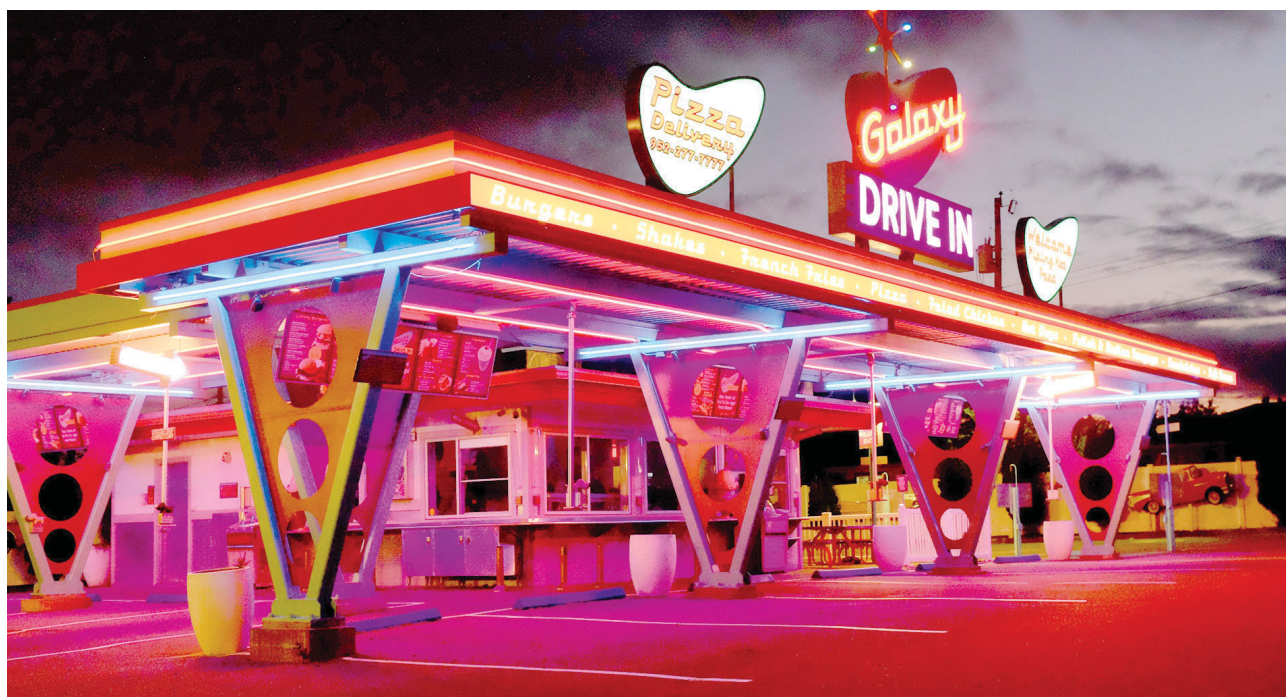
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SARAH BRUMBLE

# ALIENS & OFFERS WELCOME

This vacant drive-in serves no man, on principle

BY SARAH BRUMBLE

Earlier this summer, we received a letter from Robin, who wrote: “For the past year, I have occasionally driven past a disturbing/inviting site along Highway 7 in St. Louis Park. Tidy, well-lit, and well-groomed is the Galaxy Drive In. I salivate for a burger and fries under the open sky above the smooth asphalt. It looks open... but it is void of humans, leaving my belly void of hope for that burger and fries. Why does the Galaxy continue to beckon me by looking open but only taunting me with ultimately empty counters?”

Honestly, we kinda thought Robin’s description of a pristine ghost drive-in illuminated for years was exaggerated until we saw it firsthand.

Glowing like a neon hallucination in the friscalating dusklight, punctuated by the occasional alien, the Galaxy Drive In makes... no sense. Aesthetically it’s a portal between 1953 and 1988. Aside from aloof neighborhood street traffic, no humans can

be found. No windows are broken, and the lawn is perfectly manicured. Signs suggest ordering fried chicken and cheeseburgers you imagine dripping with nostalgia, ones that taste better than any found in the real world.

This is where Steven Schussler comes into play, whether or not he realizes it. He bought this neighborhood joint in 2009. The drive-in dates back to 1951 and was most recently called Wagner’s; it was Schussler who renamed it the Galaxy. Across the street is his branding firm, Schussler Creative Inc., which has “Inventions, Ideas, Contraptions, and Dreams” scrawled across the front in block letters.

As its head, Schussler has become a sort of John Hammond-meets-Willy Wonka figure, working with a budget Trump would love to squander. Through his work, he’s developed an intimidating reputation as a passionate world-builder who’s a stickler for details. When he felt its quality of service was slipping, he refused to reopen

the drive-in for the season in 2016. And, for three whole days that summer, the Galaxy was for sale.

“I got sick to my stomach,” he says. “I’m very passionate about it. I put it up for sale for a couple days and I got very upset when I saw the sign, and I got the calls from people thinking that we were desperate.”

“It’s never been about money, which is 99 percent of everybody else in the world. I just really want to make that clear, because people ask all the time,” he reiterated. “It breaks my heart.”

For years, Schussler has instead chosen an unlikely path. “I cut the lawn. I use the sprinklers. I take the snow off and salt it in the winter. I paint it every spring. I do amazing things. It costs me \$130,000 a year to close it,” he laughs. “\$130,000 a year to keep it closed—it’s unbelievable! Nobody would believe this!”

By this point he’s accustomed to having people complaining—pleading, even—to him about the place’s closure. The Galaxy once had an irreplicable atmosphere celebrating intergalactic pal-ship like few places in this solar system. They miss not-so-little things like playing a giant chess board, and smaller details like ice cream cones.

“So you set yourself up and you’re like, ‘Why don’t you sell it?’ Well, first of all, it’s been in the neighborhood for over 65 years, okay? Kids, and their families, and their grandparents love the chess set and the checkers set and the overall feeling of

the old drive-ins. That’s why I built it and put over a million and a half dollars into it—now close to a million-seven into it—and all I want to do is find a great operator who wants to make a lot of money.”

Though money’s not an issue, it comes up a lot. Meeting his expectations will be difficult. Over his career Schussler founded the Rainforest Cafe, establishing 45 of those wildly

**GALAXY DRIVE IN** popular themed eateries across three continents while running five of Disney World

Orlando’s top restaurants. “My standards were born out of what was created that we’ve been successful with.” The man talks a big game because he’s bona fide.

“I decided to close it until we found the right people, and the right combination, and the right menu, the right food, the right operators... and for my money, it was worth spending \$130,000 a year to keep it closed, to not serve a bad product or have bad service. You don’t go to a drive-in and wait 40 minutes for a hamburger and French fries. At the end, that’s what happened.”

Right though Schussler is from a certain standpoint, translating such an uncompromising sense of vision to a one-off, seasonal drive-in located in suburban Minnesota may well prove the hitch in this giddy-up.

Most of us come from a different world than Steven Schussler, where money is of consequence, and eventually we must compromise or sell what we care about. But it’s easy to see the story of the Galaxy Drive In as more than the thing itself. It’s become an issue of emotion, which is universally identifiable. We all have things we delay parting with out of fear that those destined to care for them won’t do so properly. Maybe, for you, it was your first car: It might not be as nice as the day you got it, but you can still feel potential and magic in it. How long did you pour money into it until someone convinced you to let go? Did you ever take it to a drive-in, radiant on the horizon?

It seems like Schussler has built the Galaxy into this idea, deep in his heart. “I’m willing to give up 50 percent of my ownership in the property and the business just to find the right guy or woman or team, and I’m very upset by the fact that I can’t.” At least giving up half ownership is the beginning of getting the drive-in open again. If only there were someone who met his standards... 

*Schussler’s always entertaining offers. Contact him at [steven@schusslercreative.com](mailto:steven@schusslercreative.com).*



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WITH HOUSES, DENNY

SEPT 17



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SEPT 18



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SEPT 19



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WITH DEEP SEA DIVER

SEPT 20



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SEPT 21

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WITH POOLSIDE

SEPT 13



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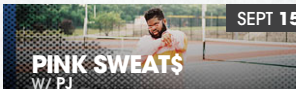
**THE HU**

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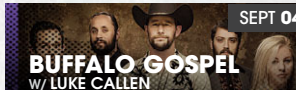
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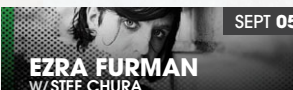
SEPT 05



**JOSIAH JOHNSON**  
FORMERLY OF THE HEAD AND THE HEART  
W/ ECHOES & ARTIFACTS

SEPT 09

## TURF CLUB



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SURFS WITH FREINDS

SEPT 06



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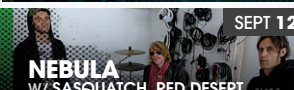
**MANNEQUIN PUSSY**  
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SEPT 10



**SHEER MAG**  
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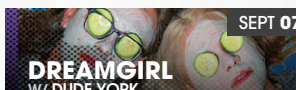
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SEPT 12



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SEPT 13



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SEPT 07



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W/ DAN OWEN

SEPT 11

## AROUND TOWN



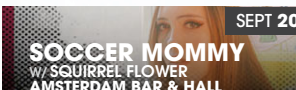
**OF MONSTERS AND MEN**  
W/ LOWER DENS  
SURLY BREWING FESTIVAL FIELD

SEPT 14



**LESLIE STEVENS**  
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Icehouse MPLS

SEPT 18



**SOCCER MOMMY**  
W/ SQUIRREL FLOWER  
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL

SEPT 20



**JONATHAN WILSON**  
Icehouse MPLS

SEPT 25



**BRENT COBB AND THEM**  
THE CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

SEPT 28



# A LIST

**FRIDAY** Crypticon freaks people out p. 19

**SATURDAY** Dear Gaza Block Party p. 20

**SUNDAY** Vegan eats at Linden Hills p. 21

Dougie Padilla turns 70 with an art party at Rouge Buddha.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

**WEDNESDAY 9.4**

**COMEDY**

**DAVID HUNTSBERGER**

ACME COMEDY CO.

After relocating to Austin, Texas, David Huntsberger is considering leaving Los Angeles, where he's lived for the past

10 years, for good. "It seems likely we'll stay [in Austin], but we also talk about moving someplace like Nevada that's big and open and quiet." Huntsberger grew up near Carson City, Nevada, and sometimes misses the slower pace. "I could take my horse and ride out into the desert and not see another

person for hours. I remember talking with my friends and saying, 'Can you imagine living in one of those cities? How do they do it?' Then the other day I was sitting in traffic thinking, 'How did this happen?'" The former *Professor Blastoff* podcast co-host now has a solo show, *Space Cave*. "Science is the

only language you can use to describe the universe at large," Huntsberger notes. "We live in a solar system in a galaxy, and people say, 'Whoa, science stuff.' But no, that's just like describing your house and all its rooms." While science does inform some of his set, it's broader than that. "It factors in, but it's not science comedy." 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**

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TEK BOX

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**COMEDY  
LEV FER**

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

"I was constantly getting into trouble and had no regard for authority," comedian Lev Fer says about growing up in North Carolina. "All I

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 ►**



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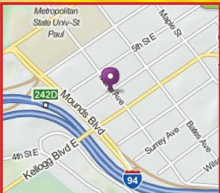
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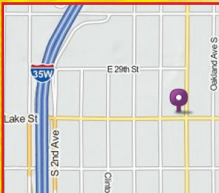
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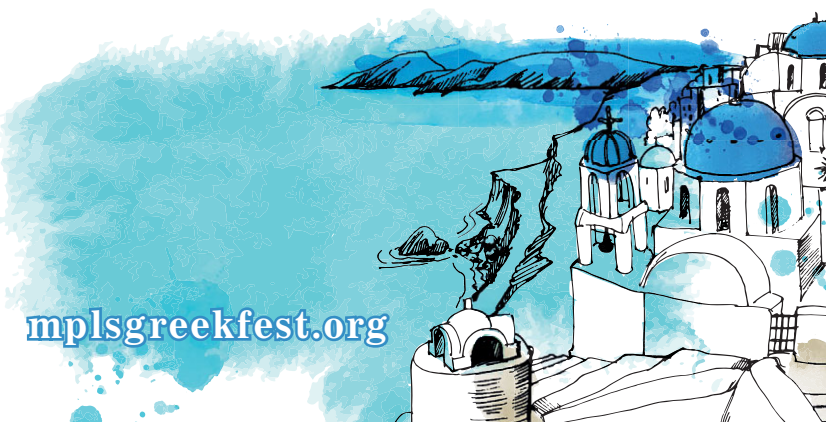
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## THURSDAY

## PORN

DAN SAVAGE'S  
14TH ANNUAL  
HUMP! FILM  
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MAIN THEATRE

Decades ago, before the internet was a thing, people had to venture to adult movie theaters if they wanted to watch porn. Since 2005, Dan Savage has been keeping this old-school format alive with the traveling Hump! Film Festival. Each iteration features a carefully curated collection of five-minute shorts. There's no polished porn here, as all submissions are amateur-made. What you'll see on screen varies widely each season, as these horny one-time stars come in all shapes and sizes, are young and old, and have all kinds of different gender identities, sexualities, and kinks. Tickets and more info can be found at [www.humpfilmfest.com](http://www.humpfilmfest.com). 7 and 9:30 p.m. Thursday; 6, 8:15, and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$20. 115 Main St. SE, Minneapolis; 612-331-4723.

**Through Saturday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

COURTESY OF THE EVENT ORGANIZERS

## CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

cared about was making the people around me laugh. To me, that's the greatest feeling in the world. Being around people you love and making them laugh." However, he didn't immediately seek a career in comedy, instead applying for college along with his classmates. "When I was a kid I was pretty smart, and I thought I was going to be a lawyer. Turns out I just liked to wear suits. That's not a good reason to go into a career like that." When he started working on his first college application, something struck him. "My future flashed before my eyes," he recalls. "I saw myself going to college, then business school, like my brother, and becoming a manager. I immediately knew I had to commit to comedy." Shortly after graduating, he moved to New York City. After two years of not getting very far, he made a short YouTube film about being a standup in the Big Apple. His friends were mortified, and told him to take it down, as they feared it would kill his career. He obliged, but it had already been seen by a management company, and they signed him shortly after. Fer is now headlining clubs across the country and is building an hour he hopes to release as a special next year. 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday.

\$16-\$23. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday —P.F. WILSON**

## FRIDAY 9.6

## COMEDY

## CHLOE RADCLIFFE

THE COMEDY CORNER UNDERGROUND

Four years ago, Chloe Radcliffe was laid off from Target as part of the Great Purge of 2015. While others sought similar job opportunities, Radcliffe decided to go a different route, trying standup comedy for the very first time. "I thought I'd try it once and then never do it again," she says, "but I loved it immediately." Since then, she has moved to New York, was named one of Conan O'Brien's "Comics to Watch" as part of the New York Comedy Festival, and has been a driving force behind the 10,000 Laughs Festival. "There's a cycle that I think most people pursuing a dream experience," she says. "Feel successful, ride that high, feel unsuccessful, beat yourself up, rinse and repeat. In Minneapolis, that cycle happens every six months for me. In New York, it happens once a week." This weekend, Radcliffe will be riding that high when she returns to Minneapolis as a headliner, armed with a polished hour of material that could easily show up on a Netflix special or late-night talk show very soon. Still, she

hasn't let her rise in comedy change her need for constant reassurance. "At this point, my focus is just headlining small rooms like the CCU. I've also got a couple of non-standup projects cooking, so please follow me on Instagram. Please God, I need this." 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 10 p.m. Saturday. \$10. 1501 S. Washington Ave., Minneapolis.

**Also Saturday —PATRICK STRAIT**

## FESTIVAL

## CRYPTICON MN

HILTON MINNEAPOLIS ST. PAUL  
AIRPORT - MALL OF AMERICA

Jesse Ventura, the brash professional wrestler who jolted the political establishment as governor of Minnesota, will serve as an honorary guest at the 14th annual Crypticon, a celebration of horror, sci-fi, and fantasy. Opinions of Ventura's prowess as governor (not to mention as a B-movie actor) are known to vary wildly, but his livewire personality will undoubtedly prove a draw for the con's reliably energetic audience. Of course, Ventura's is merely the most prominent name among a celebrity roster that includes actors from the *Hellraiser* films (including Doug Bradley, synonymous with his iconic role as demonic cenobite Pinhead), the *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise (including enduring heroine Heather Langenkamp), and two alumni from television's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Nicholas Brendon, Mark Metcalf). All told, over 20 guests will be on hand to sign autographs, snap

photos, and participate in panels and Q&As. Attendees can also browse dealer rooms for original art and souvenir memorabilia, recharge to a frightful film in the screening room, partake in the joyfully macabre cosplay contest, or haunt one of the many informal after-hours parties. Find tickets and more info at [crypticonminneapolis.com](http://crypticonminneapolis.com). 4:30 to 10 p.m. Friday; 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday; 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. \$17-\$32 daily; \$50 weekend package; \$70-\$154 VIP passes. 3800 American Blvd. E., Bloomington; 952-854-2100.

**Through Sunday —BRAD RICHASON**

## ART/GALLERY

## LUCKY 70

ROGUE BUDDHA GALLERY

Local artist Dougie Padilla is turning 70. To celebrate, Rogue Buddha Gallery is hosting an exhibition of his art, as well as a number of related events. Padilla works in a variety of mediums, often drawing on spiritual themes for his pieces, which feature bright colors, vivid creatures, exploding patterns, and mystical energy. The show will include paintings, drawings, original prints, tile work, and an immersive ofrenda (altar) installation of Día de los Muertos skulls. Things kick off at the opening reception on Friday, September 6, where you can wish Padilla a happy birthday from 7 to 11 p.m. Other events include a conversation with Karen Mary Davalos on September 12, a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 ►

The gang's all here  
at Crypticon.

LEILA NAVID/STAR TRIBUNE



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## A-LIST

**SATURDAY**

### ART/MUSEUM THEASTER GATES: ASSEMBLY HALL

WALKER ART CENTER

For his first major U.S. exhibition, Chicago-based social practice artist Theaster Gates bucks Marie Kondo-ization and other minimalist trends to methodically install four rooms with castoff objects he's collected. The objective behind re-contextualizing these items is to inject them with new meaning. As viewers, looking at them provides only one pathway in. Gates encourages us to also investigate their historical and cultural provenance, delight in the inspiration behind them, celebrate the conversations they elicit, and reach deeply into their resonance as representations of African-American material culture. In the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden stands Gates' first outdoor commission, *Black Vessel for a Saint*, in which a salvaged statue of Saint Laurence, the patron saint of librarians and archivists, stands watch. This show is included with museum admission. 725 Vineland Place, Minneapolis; 612-375-7600. **Through January 12** —**CAMILLE LEFEVRE**



SARA POOLEY. COURTESY WHITE CUBE.

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

performance and book launch on September 26, and a talk with Padilla on October 3. Free. 357 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-331-3889.

**Through October 12** —**SHEILA REGAN**

**SATURDAY 9.7**

**FESTIVAL**

### NIGHT MARKET AT CHROMA ZONE MURAL & ART FEST

CREATIVE ENTERPRISE ZONE

The Creative Enterprise Zone, an artist hub located in the Raymond/University area of St. Paul, invites you to immerse yourself in the world of street art. This multi-day festival features mural painting, nighttime fun, and beer. Things kick off Friday with a reception and party at Dual Citizen Brewing Co. (725 Raymond Ave.), which will get a new outdoor mural this weekend. On Saturday and Sunday, barhoppers will be encouraged to drink beer at a variety of St. Paul breweries—including Lake Monster, Can Can, Black Stack, and Bang—with \$1 from each branded pint benefiting the festival. Saturday and Sunday, Little Mekong Night Market returns with an artsy edge. In addition to Asian eats, dance, and performances, local artist Reggie LeFlore will create a glow-in-the-dark mural using fluorescent

spray paint. Sunday will include a “sound mural,” hosted by experimental artists Beatrix\*Jar. Find the complete schedule of happenings at [www.chromazone.net](http://www.chromazone.net). 5 p.m. to midnight Saturday; 3 to 10 p.m. Sunday. Free. The intersection of University Avenue West and Lasalle Street, St. Paul. **Through Sunday** —**JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

**PERFORMANCE**

### MY AQAL STAGE

CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER

In 2017, multimedia artist Ifrah Mansour teamed up with people in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood to create a giant nomadic Somali house, called an “aqal.” The interactive installation was part of the Northern Spark festival. This week, Mansour is returning to the project. Over the course of three days, she will lead the building of a new aqal. Then, on Saturday, it will open up to the public. There will be a reception starting at 6 p.m., which will include snacks and mini-performances. Starting at 9:30 p.m., guests can enjoy live music from Thunder Band, buraanbur poetry led by Caasho Buranburtooy, and a set featuring the Somali Museum Dance Troupe. The aqal will return for several pop-ups, including events on September 13 and 20, and it will also be at the Global Roots Festival from September 23-25. 6 p.m. to midnight. Free. 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. —**SHEILA REGAN**



These are short but entertaining flights.



ATEŞ EVIRGEN/RED BULL CONTENT POOL

## FESTIVAL DEAR GAZA BLOCK PARTY

WEST 24TH STREET

This Saturday, folks will come together in the Wedge neighborhood to celebrate Palestinian culture and to showcase the local Arab-American community. The afternoon will include music onstage from the likes of Hello Psychaleppo, a Syrian artist who mashes 1950s Arabic pop with electronic music, and Brooklyn-based garage-rock girl band Habibi. Clarissa Bitar, Yevrah, WNDRLND, DJ Yasmeenah, Kamoon, and others will play sets as well. There will also be dance performances, and art activities exploring traditional Palestinian textiles. World Street Kitchen and Milkjam Creamery will serve up special menus inspired by Arab eats. This event, now in its fifth year, has raised over \$90,000 for organizations that offer aid to people in the Gaza Strip; this year's \$10 suggested donation will benefit the Anera In-Kind Medical Relief Program. 4 to 10 p.m. Free; \$10 suggested donation. 2401 Lyndale Ave. S., Minneapolis. West 24th Street between Lyndale and Garfield, Minneapolis. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

## SPORTS

### RED BULL FLUGTAG ST. PAUL

HARRIET ISLAND REGIONAL PARK

"Flugtag" is German for "Flying Day." And while flying is definitely the goal of this competition, most entrants will probably be doing more of a flop or a crash into the water. But that's part of the fun. This international

event is stopping by St. Paul for the second time. Fifty Twin Cities teams have created contraptions to hurl off a runway over the Mississippi River. A panel of judges will determine winners based on distance, creativity, and showmanship. Competitors include the Jucy Lucy-inspired Das Fliegenlucy, featuring employees from the Nook in St. Paul; the St. Paul RaccoonTeurs, who will honor the raccoon who took the internet by storm after climbing the UBS Building; and the Spoonbridge Cherry Glider, named after the iconic Minneapolis Sculpture Garden piece. After the event, stop by the Flugtag Block Party on West Seventh Street for live music, beer, and eats. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free. 200 Dr. Justus O'Hage Blvd., St. Paul. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SUNDAY 9.8

## FOOD

### EXTRAVEGANZA

LINDEN HILLS FARMERS MARKET

Sundays in September at Linden Hills Market will be all about showcasing local vegan businesses and animal-rights organizations. This includes savory and sweet treats from Prairie Vegan Pies, popsicles made from locally sourced ingredients by Saint Pops, and goods from a variety of Twin Cities bakeries and pastry shops. Sample your way through and find new things to crave. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free. 2813 W. 43rd St., Minneapolis; 612-867-0854. Through September 29 —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

**DEE MILLER BAND**

UPCOMING

Wednesday, September 11

**JOEY TENUTO BAND**

WITH DAINA DE PREZ

Friday, September 20- Sunday, September 22

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FILM

## IT'S NOT A SPRINT

*Brittany Runs a Marathon* takes a realistic, life-affirming look at self-improvement



AMAZON STUDIOS

BY TONY LIBERA

America hits the height of the body-positivity movement, a film like *Brittany Runs a Marathon* could be treading on tricky ground. A story about a New York City slacker who decides to lose a bunch of weight and run a marathon might've once seemed like a universally feel-good watch, but contemporary discourse around fitness and body image suggests that's no longer a given.

Criticism wouldn't be unfounded if this movie played out like some Hollywood "weight-loss journey" cliché. Instead, *Brittany Runs a Marathon* embraces the complexities of modern health, exploring what self-betterment really means.

Writer-director Paul Downs Colaizzo based the movie on his friend and former roommate, Brittany O'Neil, but her life is more a framework than a one-to-one source match. As such, *Brittany Runs a Marathon* can sidestep biopic pitfalls, round out its cast with novel supporting characters, and explore broader themes without feeling inauthentic. Weight is the catalyst, but the film's ultimate focus is the balance of acceptance and self-improvement, whether

that means proving something to yourself, refocusing creative energy, or keeping old demons at bay.

This version of Brittany (Jillian Bell) is a hard-partying, fast food-loving theater usher who's getting into her late twenties. Despite her smarts and masterful comedic timing, she has little ambition beyond getting fucked up with her narcissist roommate (Alice Lee) and sleeping a lot. One day Brittany heads to a cheap doctor (Patch Darragh) to score Adderall. He sees through the ruse and blindsides her with some actual medical advice: Help out your liver and try losing some weight. "I feel like you totally missed the point of those Dove ads," Brittany replies.

She eventually decides that a little exercise might not be the worst thing. After a jog around the block, Brittany joins her neighbor's (Michaela Watkins) running club and soon sets her sights higher.

Marathon movies have extremely predictable arcs—and this thing isn't called *Brittany Tries to Run a Marathon*—so to work, it needs a compelling lead-up that doesn't bank on a thrilling conclusion. Colaizzo lets Brittany backslide just as hard as she progresses, but his film's success is

**BRITTANY RUNS A MARATHON**

directed by Paul Downs Colaizzo  
area theaters, now playing

predicated on a realistic approach to health. Though a marathon is a daunting goal, this isn't some extreme fitness aspiration piece. In fact, it provides a quasi-Buddhist outlook: ditch the bathroom scale, exercise without overdoing it, indulge in occasional drinks and dessert. Very Middle Path.

*Brittany Runs a Marathon* also offers welcome models of 21st-century love. The matter-of-factness with which Colaizzo reveals two gay dads, an interracial marriage, and a brown love interest who isn't a cab driver/doctor/terrorist furthers an implicit mission of representation and really makes an impact on the story. It doesn't hurt that the cast members filling said roles are as funny as they are moving. Bell's the standout here, but running pal Seth (Micah Stock), de facto dad Demetrius (Lil Rel Howery), and romantic partner Jern (Utkarsh Ambudkar) all bring the goods.

Put it together, and you get a winning take on wellness—equal parts fun and heartfelt—that's an impressive debut feature for Paul Downs Colaizzo. **B+**



# ANGRY BIRDS

Capturing animal anarchy onstage



BY JAY GABLER

Chirps and squawks are easy to find on the internet, but if you want a good wing flap, you'll have to make it yourself. That's what Robert Hoffman has learned as sound designer for Theatre in the Round's new production of *The Birds*. "The Alfred Hitchcock film features mostly crows and eagles," says Hoffman, who improvised a feathers-and-flyswatter device to make a "pretty convincing" flapping sound. "I tried to expand the variety. Even small, cute, chirpy birds... what would birds like that sound like if they were angry?"

Sound is critical in Conor McPherson's 2009 play, because—spoiler alert—you never actually see the birds. "There are sound cues all throughout the show," says director Seth Kaltwasser. "There's this constant soundscape of birds outside."

While the play is based on the same 1952 Daphne du Maurier story that inspired Hitchcock's classic 1963 film, it tells a very different story. "Our play features four completely new characters that don't appear

in the movie," explains Kaltwasser. "It all takes place within a farmhouse where two survivors have taken refuge."

The Guthrie Theater produced *The Birds* in 2012, but the play will be a very different experience on Theatre in the Round's distinctive arena stage. "You feel like you're right there" with the trapped characters, says Kaltwasser. "This sense of claustrophobia, this sense of paranoia grows and grows."

The stage does pose some challenges: "There are several moments in the play where the characters are boarding up windows or peering through doors," says Kaltwasser. "The designers and cast and I have had to think creatively about how to achieve that effect when there are no walls."

Hoffman is employing the full range of the sound system's 360-degree capabilities, using as many as 10 speakers. "Birds have to come from specific areas," he says. "That involves a lot of complex programming."

While the play's premise has the characters fighting to survive an unexpected wave of aggression from their feathered former friends, the drama is equally about how

## THE BIRDS

Theatre in the Round  
245 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis  
612-333-3010; through September 29

they'll survive being cooped up with one another. Although a central plot strand has two women developing a mutual animosity while a male character tries to make peace, Kaltwasser says he and his cast are striving to avoid melodrama.

"I didn't want this to become a play about two women fighting over a man in the middle," he says. Instead, the production speaks to a broader tension between order and chaos. "It's been a much more rich conversation than what a person might initially see upon a first read of the script."

The play's fantasy scenario is very relevant to the real-world environmental challenges we're facing, says Kaltwasser. "In a moment when people have a choice to unite and band together against an overwhelming catastrophe, they get distracted fighting with each other."

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SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15

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SEP 21 . . . . . Brunch Show w/ Trash Catties  
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SEP 27 . . . . . Sunless // Cell (CAN)  
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Doors 9pm / Show 9:30pm / Free

Wednesday, September 11

The Cedar and KFAI Present  
**BLACK UHURU**  
with special guest  
Doors 7pm / Show 7:30pm / All Ages / Standing / \$25 Advanced / \$30 DOS

Thursday, September 12

The Cedar Presents  
**RUSSIAN CIRCLES WITH FACS**  
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Friday, September 13

The Cedar and KFAI Present  
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## TRANSMISSION

WEDNESDAY 10PM  
NEW WAVE • SYNTHPOP • PUNK  
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- 9.5 SPACE MONKEY MAFIA 8PM
- 9.6 MAE SIMPSON 9PM
- 9.7 DEUCES UP DANCE PARTY 10PM
- 9.8 MURPHY'S LAW (NYHC)

- 9.12 GIUDA (FROM ITALY)
- 9.13 BOWIEOKE (DAVID BOWIE KARAOKE)
- 9.14 MALAMANYA
- 9.15 DRUMSET KARAOKE
- 9.17 TUESDAY NIGHT COMEDY SHOWCASE
- 9.20 HOT PANTS
- 9.30 MICHAEL GRAVES
- 10.5 JOHN NEMETH
- 10.24 DALE WATSON

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|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| WED. | <b>STARLITE BLUES BAND</b> 7-10PM                                                                                                                                                        |
| THU. | <b>MARK ARNESON BAND WITH MIA DORR</b> 8PM                                                                                                                                               |
| FRI. | <b>MARY ELIAS &amp; THE YOUNG RELICS</b> 5PM<br><b>FUNCTION JUNCTION</b> 9PM                                                                                                             |
| SAT. | <b>ROXXY HALL BAND</b> 8PM                                                                                                                                                               |
| SUN. | <b>MINNESOTA BLUES SOCIETY</b><br><b>ROAD TO MEMPHIS FUNDRAISER</b><br>FEATURING LISA WENGER/ TIM WICK DUO<br>ERIN MCCAWLEY'S HRRISON STREET BAND<br>VODOO CHICKEN CRAIG CLARK BAND 12PM |
| TUE. | <b>NOVA JAZZ ORCHESTRA</b> 7PM<br><b>WILLIE WALKER &amp; JELLYBEAN JOHNSON</b> 9-12PM                                                                                                    |

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KENDALL ROCK

# HEY SIRI, SHOW ME THE MEANING OF 'PHARMAKON'

With her latest album as Humbird, Siri Undlin discovers herself by channeling the voices of other women

BY YOUA VANG

**S**iri Undlin remembers why people wrote songs in the first place: to pass along tales that didn't require a pen and paper to preserve them. The title of Undlin's new album as Humbird, *Pharmakon*, comes from a Greek word with two diametrically opposite meanings: remedy and poison all in one. It can describe a spell or a charm that brings the answer you seek, but that answer can also kill you.

Coming home to Minnesota may be the much-traveled songwriter's own personal *pharmakon*. It's necessary to recenter her world, but staying here can invite complacency and deaden the capacity for change, as Undlin shares from her Minneapolis home on a late summer evening.

"You know, I'm a white woman living in Minnesota, and I think it's really important for me to be constantly aware of my own privilege and also the complacency that comes with it," says Undlin. "I think part of what draws me to songwriting and touring is this really insatiable, constant questioning of 'What's behind that next horizon? Who's that person? What can I learn from them? What can they learn from me?' It's this curiosity thing, and I feel it's my quest to figure out how it all connects."

Like a cicada finding new life by squeezing out of its skin, Undlin hit the road a few years ago and took some jobs unrelated to music. She worked on a flower farm in Vermont for a month, harvesting dahlias, foxgloves, and yarrow. The day's hard

labor left her sweaty and dirty but allowed her mind to wander, fueling creative late afternoons and early evenings, when she cultivated the ideas that had sprouted in her soft-focused mind.

The songs Undlin wrote during this period dreamily conjure days gone by. Only later did she realize she'd unwittingly written about strong women whose experiences and stories were connected by universal themes.

Undlin worked with engineer Brian Joseph (Bon Iver, Sufjan Stevens) and producer Shane Leonard (Field Report) to bring the songs to life. When they finished recording, she took a step back and looked at the songs she'd strung together and realized the lyrics all concerned women, real and mythological. She found that each track had its own narrator coming from a different perspective, but that each also centered around the struggles women have faced for thousands of years—the policing of their bodies, the roles they are forced into, and how they do what they can to push forward.

Undlin wrote the opening track, "48 Hours," from her own experience after working a double shift at a pizza restaurant. In a quick minute and forty seconds, Undlin manages to capture all the claus-

## HUMBIRD

Album release show for *Pharmakon*  
Parkway Theater, Minneapolis  
Saturday, September 7

trophobia of being stuck in a job you hate with nowhere to turn.

Through the women she writes about, Undlin has lived many lives. "I like educating myself on the history of women through time—and not just women, but I know I tend to gravitate towards those stories, because that's how I identify, and it helps me to understand so much of my behavior," she says. "So much of what I think I'm supposed to do is really just certain voices and power trying to keep women oppressed. The body is this wild animal thing; we are not separate from nature, we're part of it, and the civilizing of women's bodies is a really dangerous thing."

"That leads me to constantly question my own choices and my complacency when I get too comfortable," she continues. "I should be asking more questions of myself as to how can I be more active and present. Questions like, 'I'm a woman, and I'm being pushed into certain boxes. Am I pushing myself into them? Am I listening to voices? Is this about a certain kind of pressure that's thousands of years old? Or is it specific to my own era?' I don't know. I don't really have answers, but I was wrestling with all those ideas when I wrote these songs."

After she releases this new album, Undlin will hit the road for five weeks with her band to shake off the comforts of home. She would never have found her stories and songs without traveling, but touring does take its toll. "Being on the road so much really comes at a cost of your mental and physical health," she says. "I think I am really trying to hold myself accountable, because if I'm not healthy, I'm definitely not doing good work. I want to connect with people and to have conversations with someone who says, 'This song made a difference for me today.' That's such a gift."

"Then other days—especially with social media, like the self promotional aspects of it—it feels like this big ego indulgence. You can feel both of those things in the same day, so it's a lot of whiplash. The older I get, the more I realize that's OK. I think when you start to fight that inner voice—the one that says I need to settle down, even though you don't want to—that's when it's detrimental to your mental health. That's when you can miss out on the beauty that is around you, because you're so focused on that fight." 





Sheer Mag

MARIE LIN

### WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 4

#### GLEN HANSARD

With Ohmme. 6 p.m. Sept. 4; \$36-\$61. Historic State Theatre, 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007.

#### THE HIGH KINGS

7:30 p.m. Sept. 4; \$22-\$25. The Cedar Cultural Center, 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674.

### THURSDAY, SEPT. 5

#### LAS CAFETERAS

7:30 p.m. Sept. 5; \$18-\$20. The Cedar Cultural Center, 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674.

## EZRA FURMAN

TURF CLUB, THURSDAY 9.5

Ezra Furman makes flashy, frenetic, horn-peppered glam-folk, stomping his way through episodic genre fictions set in mythical American backwaters. Obsessed with traditional masculinity, partially because it excludes him as a queer artist and partially because he can subvert it while retaining the essential underlying romanticism, he sings in an anxious, worn-down yet empathetic snarl. His latest, *Twelve Nudes*, was released August 30. With Stef Chura. 21+. 7:30 p.m. \$15/\$17. 1601 University Ave., St. Paul; 651-647-0486. —LUCAS FAGEN

### MONDAY, SEPT. 9

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

FINE LINE, MONDAY 9.9

Titus Andronicus play the kind of messy, anthemic punk that aims to lift you above your daily drudgery and sing along with big choruses that are unkempt because life is. Their new Bob Mould-produced *An Obelisk* is their shortest and fastest album ever, as Patrick Stickles bellows “(I Blame) Society” and inveighs against

“Tumult Around the World.” With Control Top. 18+. 7 p.m. \$15/\$17. 318 First Ave. N.; 612-338-8388. —LUCAS FAGEN

## MASSIVE ATTACK

PALACE THEATRE, TUESDAY 9.10

The original immersive trip-hop eccentrics have been crafting menacing yet covertly soothing soundscapes for over three decades. Their current tour celebrates the 20th anniversary of their third album, 1998’s *Mezzanine*, which last year became the first album to be encoded into synthetic DNA in collaboration with the Swiss university ETH Zurich. With Elizabeth Fraser and Horace Andy. 18+. 7 p.m. \$69.50/\$100. 17 W. Seventh Place, St. Paul; 800-514-3849. —LUCAS FAGEN

### FRIDAY, SEPT. 6

#### CHAMPAGNE CONFETTI: FEATURING ABY WOLF & FRIENDS

10:30 p.m. Sept. 6; \$15-\$20. Dakota, 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-1010.

#### GRACE VANDERWAAL

All ages. 7 p.m. Sept. 6; \$34-\$42. Varsity Theater, 1308 4th St. SE, Minneapolis; 844-678-5483.

#### THE WHO

With Reignwolf. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 6; Xcel Energy Center, 199 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul; 651-726-8240.

### SATURDAY, SEPT. 7

#### DREAMGIRL

With Dude York. 8 p.m. Sept. 7; \$12. 7th St. Entry, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.

#### NIMA RUMBA

6 p.m. Sept. 7; \$20-\$30. Amsterdam Bar and Hall, 6 W. 6th St., St. Paul; 612-285-3112. Static Panic (EP Release Show) With John Chuck & the Class and Kainalu. Moved from the Fine Line. All original tickets will be honored. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 7; \$12-\$30.



JESSICA LEHRMAN

Turf Club, 1601 University Ave. W., St. Paul; 651-647-0486.

#### THOMAS RHETT

With Dustin Lynch, Russell Dickerson, and Rhett Akins. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 7; Xcel Energy Center, 199 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul; 651-726-8240.

### SUNDAY, SEPT. 8

## SHEER MAG

TURF CLUB, SUNDAY 9.8

Sheer Mag maintain punk speed even as their fuzzy, discrete, efficient power chords and fractured electric riffs nod to pre-punk ’70s hard rock. The Philly band doesn’t aim for the familiarity of retro so much as the pathos of discovering and falling in love with old songs; their synthetic, bass-heavy disco tracks (“Pure Desire,” “Silver Line”) ache with particular vehemence. With Empath and Tweens. 21+. 7 p.m. \$13/\$15. 1601 University Ave., St. Paul; 651-647-0486 —LUCAS FAGEN

#### ADAM ANT

With Glam Skanks. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 8; \$53-\$63. Pantages Theatre, 710 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007.

#### DJ JAZZY JEFF AND DJ SCRATCH

7 p.m. Sept. 8; \$27. Varsity Theater, 1308 4th St. SE, Minneapolis; 844-678-5483.

#### LENNY KRAVITZ

7:30 p.m. Sept. 8; \$69.50-\$299.50. Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007.

#### MATTHEW SWEET

7 p.m. Sept. 8; \$30-\$45. Fine Line Music Cafe, 318 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8100.

#### SOCIAL DISTORTION AND FLOGGING MOLLY

With the Devil Makes Three and Le Butcherettes. All ages. 4:30 p.m. Sept. 8; \$47-\$62. Armory, 500 6th St. S., Minneapolis; 612-315-3965.

### TUESDAY, SEPT. 10

#### GRANDSON

With Nothing, Nowhere. 6 p.m. Sept. 10; \$22-\$25. First Avenue, 701 1st Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388.



FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

**♈ ARIES** (March 21-April 19): John Muir (1838-1914) was skilled at creating and using machinery. In his twenties, he diligently expressed those aptitudes. But at age 27, while working in a carriage parts factory, he suffered an accident that blinded him. For several months, he lay in bed, hoping to recuperate. During that time, Muir decided that if his sight returned, he would thereafter devote it to exploring the beauty of the natural world. The miracle came to pass, and for the rest of his life he traveled and explored the wilds of North America, becoming an influential naturalist, author, and early environmentalist. I'd love to see you respond to one of your smaller setbacks—much less dramatic than Muir's!—with comparable panache, Aries.

**♉ TAURUS** (April 20-May 20): Of all the children on the planet, three percent live in the U.S. And yet American children are in possession of forty percent of the world's toys. In accordance with astrological omens, I hereby invite you to be like an extravagant American child in the coming weeks. You have cosmic permission to seek maximum fun and treat yourself to zesty entertainment and lose yourself in uninhibited laughter and wow yourself with beguiling games and delightful gizmos. It's playtime!

**♊ GEMINI** (May 21-June 20): The *ama* are Japanese women whose job it is to dive to the sea bottom and fetch oysters bearing pearls. The water is usually cold, and the workers use no breathing apparatus, depending instead on specialized techniques to hold their breath. I propose we make them your inspirational role models. The next few weeks will be a favorable time, metaphorically speaking, for you to descend into the depths in quest of valuables and inspirations.

**♋ CANCER** (June 21-July 22): Renowned Cancerian neurologist Oliver Sacks believed that music and gardens could be vital curative agents, as therapeutic as pharmaceuticals. My personal view is that walking in nature can be as medicinal as working and lolling in a garden. As for music, I would extend his prescription to include singing and dancing as well as listening. I'm also surprised that Sacks didn't give equal recognition to the healing power of touch, which can be wondrously rejuvenating, either in its erotic or non-erotic forms. I bring these thoughts to your attention because I suspect the coming weeks will be a Golden Age of non-pharmaceutical healing for you. I'm not suggesting that you stop taking the drugs you need to stay healthy; I simply mean that music, nature, and touch will have an extra-sublime impact on your well-being.

**♌ LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22): If you visualize what ancient Rome looked like, it's possible you draw on memories of scenes you've seen portrayed in movies. The blockbuster film *Gladiator*, starring Russell Crowe and directed by Ridley Scott, may be one of those templates. The weird thing is that *Gladiator*, as well as many other such movies, were inspired by the grandiose paintings of the ancient world done by Dutch artist Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836-1912). And in many ways, his depictions were not at all factual. I bring this to your attention, Leo, in the hope that it will prod you to question the accuracy and authenticity of your mental pictures. The coming weeks will be a favorable time to get fuzzy and incorrect memories into closer alignment with the truth, and to shed any illusions that might be distorting your understanding of reality.

**♍ VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I don't know if the coming weeks will be an Anais Nin phase for you. But they could be if you want them to. It's up to you whether you'll dare to be as lyrical, sensual, deep, expressive, and emotionally rich as she was. In case you decide that YES, you will, here are quotes from Nin that might serve you well. 1. It is easy to love and there are so many ways to do it. 2. My mission, should I choose to accept it, is to find peace with exactly who and what I am. 3. I am so thirsty for the marvelous that only the marvelous has power over me. Anything I can not transform into something marvelous, I let go. 4. Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage. 5. It was while helping others to be free that I gained my own freedom.

**♎ LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Libran athlete Mickey Mantle is in Major League Baseball's Hall of Fame. He had a spectacular 18-year career, winning the Most Valuable Player Award three times, playing in 12 World Series, and being selected to the All-Star team 16 times. So it's astounding that he played with a torn ligament in his knee for 17 years, according to his biographer Jane Leavy. She quoted an orthopedic surgeon who said that Mantle compensated for his injury with "neuromuscular genius." I'm thinking that in the next few weeks you're in a position to accomplish an equivalent of Mantle's heroic adjustment.

**♏ SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): "I hid my deepest feelings so well I forgot where I placed them," wrote author Amy Tan. My Scorpio friend Audrey once made a similar confession: "I buried my secrets so completely from the prying curiosity of other people that I lost track of them myself." If either of those descriptions apply to you, Scorpio, the coming weeks will be an excellent time to secure a remedy. You'll have extra power and luck if you commune with and celebrate your hidden feelings and buried secrets.

**♐ SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): "No Eden valid without serpent." Novelist Wallace Stegner wrote that pithy riff. I think it's a good motto for you to use in the immediate future. How do you interpret it? Here's what I think. As you nourish your robust vision of paradise-on-earth, and as you carry out the practical actions that enable you to manifest that vision, it's wise to have some creative irritant in the midst of it. That bug, that question, that tantalizing mystery is the key to keeping you honest and discerning. It gives credibility and gravitas to your idealistic striving.

**♑ CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The coco de mer is a palm tree that grows in the Seychelles. Its seed is huge, weighing as much as 40 pounds and having a diameter of 19 inches. The seed takes seven years to grow into its mature form, then takes an additional two years to germinate. Everything I just said about the coco de mer seed reminds me of you, Capricorn. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, you've been working on ripening an awesome seed for a long time, and are now in the final phase before it sprouts. The Majestic Budding may not fully kick in until 2020, but I bet you're already feeling the enjoyable, mysterious pressure.

**♒ AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): If you throw a pool ball or a bronze Buddha statue at a window, the glass will break. In fact, the speed at which it fractures could reach 3,000 miles per hour. Metaphorically speaking, your mental blocks and emotional obstacles are typically not as crackable. You may smack them with your angry probes and bash them with your desperate pleas, yet have little or no effect. But I suspect that in the coming weeks, you'll have much more power than usual to shatter those vexations. So I hereby invite you to hurl your strongest blasts at your mental blocks and emotional obstacles. Don't be surprised if they collapse at unexpectedly rapid speeds.

**♓ PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20): In the thirteenth century, the Italian city of Bologna was serious about guarding the integrity of its cuisine. In 1250, the cheese guild issued a decree proclaiming, "If you make fake mortadella . . . your body will be stretched on the rack three times, you will be fined 200 gold coins, and all the food you make will be destroyed." I appreciate such devotion to purity and authenticity and factualness. And I recommend that in the coming weeks, you commit to comparable standards in your own sphere. Don't let your own offerings be compromised or corrupted. The same with the offerings you receive from other people. Be impeccable.

freewillastrology@freewillastrology.com  
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CROSSWORD

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WHERE'S THE BEEF?  
BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

- 1 Lorenzo of the Brewers  
5 LOVE sculptor \_\_\_\_ Indiana  
11 Bosch alternatives  
14 Large boats  
15 Bush that blooms in the spring  
16 In the style of  
17 Author Stibbe  
18 Boxer grimaced?  
20 "Orange Is the New Black" star Adua  
21 Charged particle  
22 Guitar god who had an Experience, to fans  
23 Spots where the victors all hang together?  
29 Makes bootees, say  
30 Movie tough guy Ray  
31 Dr. who treats vertigo and sleep apnea  
32 Super-satisfy  
33 Slowness metaphor  
34 Anal probe overseers, supposedly  
35 "Russia's capital is DA BOMB!"?  
39 Sure shot  
42 Intends  
43 Shaving product that sounds like when you might use it  
47 Fish for breakfast  
48 Completely transfixed  
49 It's similar to slander  
50 What an assistant to Robert Schumann did for his 1st Symphony?  
54 Mixture of everything  
55 Scale parts  
56 Distance of a proverbial epic journey

- 57 Freaking out, and a hint to the theme answers  
62 Conform  
63 Washington bill  
64 Defender room  
65 Lille lady  
66 Some NFL linemen  
67 Dragster's wheels  
68 Typical Insta user

Down

- 1 Hockey team with an orca in its logo  
2 Big name in shit iced tea  
3 Phrase said when the lights turn on?  
4 Anti-Russian election meddling org.  
5 Unwanted discovery in home inspections  
6 Form of oxygen  
7 It's got the goods  
8 1/3 of a gallon  
9 RV part: Abbr.  
10 The way, out East  
11 Mountainous region of northern Israel  
12 Periodic-table item  
13 Hurting souls  
19 GHWB's successor  
21 Power brokers  
24 Big-ticket \_\_\_\_  
25 Burst upon, as a stage  
26 Long fingernails  
27 Brief confession  
28 Character study  
33 Scenic view  
36 \_\_\_\_ Casspi (first Israeli to play in the NBA)  
37 Airplane assignment

- 38 Not good, but not bad  
39 "\_\_\_\_ may be man's worst enemy, but the bible says love your enemy." (Frank Sinatra)  
40 Valvoline product  
41 They sometimes get the house  
44 Holder of secrets that conspiracy theorists really want their hands on  
45 Rationally defensible  
46 "Take Me to the River" singer  
49 Record Store  
51 Versailles monarch  
52 Fantasy ring-bearer  
53 Put in stitches  
58 "I'll pass"  
59 New Nordic Hair \_\_\_\_ (baldness product)  
60 Play a part  
61 See 62-Across  
62 With 61-Across, vehicle used in drag racing

Last Week's Answer

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## SAVAGE LOVE

# Physical ideal

Does my boyfriend secretly want a goth girlfriend?



**Dan Savage**

**I** don't listen to your podcast religiously, but as soon as I told my best friend this story, she said, "That's a question for Dan Savage!" Backstory: I have a monogamous partner who I live with. It's a heterosexual relationship, but we are both bisexual. That little inkling of homosexuality really drew me to him when we first met. He also told me early on about his previous girlfriend, who looked like a "Suicide Girl" (tattoos, short skirts, dyed black hair, heavy eye makeup) but had serious issues (they had sex only 10 times in three years).

I'm by no means a Suicide Girl. I'm pretty average looking with natural hair and no tattoos. I don't wear makeup, and I have an affinity for baggy T-shirts and jeans. I love having sex but rarely do I present myself as "sexy." Recently I learned that my boyfriend follows hundreds of women on Instagram, and 95 percent of them look absolutely nothing like me. (Remember the hot Suicide Girl girlfriend? They mostly look like her.) It made me really upset. I felt insecure about myself. I felt distrustful of his positive comments about how I look, like he doesn't actually think I'm sexy. It certainly doesn't help that I want to have sex way more often than he does. He's always "tired."

I was angry and instantly craving to go back to a sexual relationship with past partners who thought I was the bee's knees. He has no idea why I would be upset. He says he feels like he's supporting these women and that they feel "empowered" by all the men leaving comments like "Show me your boobs" and "I wanna shove my cock in you." He says he deleted his Instagram just to make me happy, but I still feel shitty. Am I being overly sensitive? Is he being insensitive? Could we be sexually incompatible? At this point, I'm ready to look outside of our relationship for sexual interactions.

YOUR VERY ORDINARY INSTAGRAM GIRL

**I don't listen to your podcast, either,** YVOIG, so that makes us even. (I assume you have a podcast. Everyone does these days.)

Zooming out: If we're going to tell people they shouldn't be so shallow as to date only their "ideal" physical types and we're going to tell people they can learn to find a

broader array of people attractive and we're going to tell people they can find a person's insides so attractive that they warm to their outside—and it's mostly men people we tell these things, as women people seem less hung up on/entitled to their physical ideals—then we also need to tell people not to freak the fuck out when they stumble over evidence that they aren't their partner's ideal physical type. And we need to tell people that just because their partner has a particular type, that doesn't mean their partner isn't also attracted to them.

Zooming in: You don't have a great sex life with your boyfriend, YVOIG, as you seem to have mismatched libidos—and one partner "always" being tired isn't a problem that gets better over time. These are signs that you probably need to end this relationship. But you can end things without having a meltdown about the fact that your soon-to-be-ex-boyfriend was usually or, hell, even exclusively with one notable exception (YOU!) attracted to "Suicide Girl" types. Instead of telling yourself that every compliment your soon-to-be-ex-boyfriend ever gave you was a lie, you could tell yourself that while your soon-to-be-ex-boyfriend definitely has a type, he also found you attractive. Because you are attractive. You're so attractive that you caught his eye despite not being his usual type.

In other words, YVOIG, you don't have to feed your self-esteem into a shredder as you end this relationship.

P.S. Your soon-to-be-ex-boyfriend may have deleted his old Instagram account, but I promise you he quickly created another one. And here's hoping your soon-to-be-ex-boyfriend only directs "empowering" comments like "I wanna shove my cock in you" at the kind of people on Instagram who regard those types of comments as "supportive." They're out there—men and women—but there are fewer of them out there than too many men, gay and straight, seem to believe there are.

[mail@savagelove.net](mailto:mail@savagelove.net)

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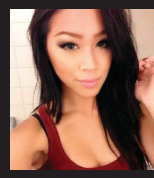
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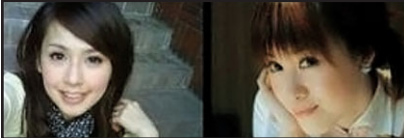
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